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Italians May Charge Turk With Slander On Jailed Bulgarian

By HENRY KAMM

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ROME, Sept. 29 — An Italian magistrate was reported today to be preparing a slander charge against the gunman who has said that Bulgarian agents masterminded both his attempt to kill Pope John Paul II and a plot to kill Lech Walesa.

Italian newspapers said the magistrate, Ilario Martella, had notified the Turkish gunman, Mehmet Ali Agca, that he was about to be indicted for slandering a Bulgarian airline employee whom Mr. Agca has implicated.

Vasil S. Dimitrov, a Bulgarian Embassy spokesman, said the judge had advised the airline employee, Sergei I. Antonov, of the pending action. Mr. Antonov has been in prison since November on the basis of Mr. Agca's charges, which the Bulgarians have denied.

Mr. Antonov's lawyer, Giuseppe Consolo, said the notification had not specified the nature of the slander.

The lawyer said Judge Martella had been investigating not only Mr. Agca's statements in connection with the attempt on the Pope's life, of which the Turk has been convicted, but also a statement that Mr. Antonov and other Bulgarians had plotted to have Mr. Agca kill Mr. Walesa, the Solidarity

leader, during a visit here in 1981.

"What is important is that Judge Martella personally signed an official communication that Agca is a liar," Mr. Consolo said in a telephone interview. He said he had received a copy of the document from Mr. Antonov in prison. The lawyer said he planned to wait for a few days before trying again to have Mr. Antonov released.

Judge Martella's office said no one competent to discuss the case was available. The magistrate is known to interpret strictly his obligation to maintain secrecy on pending cases.

Both here and on a visit to Bulgaria in July, the judge heard testimony and received documents challenging the accusations against Mr. Antonov and two former members of the Bulgarian Embassy here, Todor S. Aivasov and Maj. Zheilyo K. Vasilev. Today, according to Mr. Consolo, the magistrate interrogated other witnesses in favor of Mr. Aivasov.

Mr. Agca has contended that two days before the shooting of the Pope in St. Peter's Square he attended a meeting at Mr. Antonov's apartment at which his wife and daughter were present. Challenging that account, Bulgaria submitted testimony and documents placing Mrs. Antonov and her daughter in Yugoslavia at the time on their way to Sofia.

Bulgarian and Italian witnesses have supplied alibis for Mr. Antonov on the two occasions on which Mr. Agca said Mr. Antonov had been with him in St. Peter's Square.

Also, a man shown in a photograph running from the scene of the shooting, whom Mr. Agca identified as Mr. Aiva-

sov, was found to be someone else.

It could not be learned whether these were the reasons for the reported decision to indict Mr. Agca for slander.

Under Italian law, made more severe at the height of terrorism a few years ago, Judge Martella may keep Mr. Antonov behind bars for more than five years as long as he has not definitely found that all charges are groundless or incapable of proof.

The magistrate's reported finding that Mr. Agca lied in some way does not necessarily oblige the magistrate to free Mr. Antonov.